

VZCZCXYZ0001
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHAK #0191/01 0361527
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 051527Z FEB 09
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8697
INFO RUCNMEU/EU INTEREST COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 5342
RUEAHLA/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEATRS/TREASURY DEPT WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU//TCH// PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY
RUEUITH/TLO ANKARA TU PRIORITY
RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000191

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/04/2029
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY: INSIDER OUTLINES NEW CT MECHANISM

REF: A. 08 ANKARA 1938
[1](#)B. 08 ANKARA 2196

Classified By: POL Counselor Daniel O'Grady. Reasons: 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. A draft proposal establishing a new counterterrorism coordination mechanism already has informal clearance from Turkey's NSC and needs only final cabinet approval, according to Halil Sivgin, a political consultant with close ties to Deputy PM Cicek. Sivgin told us February 2 that he was the actual drafter of the proposal, at Cicek's request, and contended that the military has agreed to the new arrangement, which gives responsibility for CT coordination activities to the Interior Minister, though Sivgin acknowledged many issues remain unresolved. Political considerations prior to the March 29 elections are delaying final approval, he claimed. The new mechanism does not address USG concerns regarding Turkey's terrorism law. We also remain skeptical that the military will fully acquiesce to significant restructuring that weakens its authority. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Halil Sivgin, former Minister of Health and a co-founder of the Motherland Party (ANAP), claimed to be the driving force behind the proposal to establish a new counterterrorism mechanism within the GOT. The October 2007 PKK kidnapping of eight Turkish soldiers was the impetus behind the initiative, he told us February 2. After the attack, Sivgin learned that the Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) responsible for counterterrorism, Cemil Cicek, with whom he claims a close relationship, depends on intelligence received on an ad hoc basis from the various relevant agencies. Sivgin offered to lead an effort to design a new mechanism to coordinate all CT functions and to provide Cicek with information on a daily basis. His initial draft proposed a new Undersecretariat under the DPM responsible for counterterrorism (i.e., Cicek).

[1](#)3. (C) The initiative did not develop any real traction until fall 2008, Sivgin explained, when a second draft was taken up by the NSC and cabinet. (Ref A) (Note: According to press reports, the cabinet met to discuss a new CT mechanism shortly following the PKK's brazen attack against the Turkish military at Aktutun on October 4.) That proposal called for three Directorates General: 1) Separatists and Other Extremists (i.e., PKK/KGK); 2) Extremist Religious Groups (i.e., Al Qaeda, Turkish Hizbulla, etc.); and 3) Ultra-nationalist Groups. Sivgin acknowledged that the later

category is not currently a threat, but said he included the category to reflect the "flexibility" of the new structure.

New "All-of-Government" Approach

¶4. (C) The NSC forwarded a lightly amended version of Sivgin's proposal to the cabinet, where it is still being debated, Sivgin stated. In the course of discussions, the cabinet decided to establish an "Undersecretariat for Domestic Security" but to place it under the Interior Minister, rather than under the DPM responsible for counterterrorism. (Note: No DPM has more than a skeletal staff and the originally proposed arrangement would have set a precedent by creating a substantial structure under a DPM. Some critics of the plan, however, believe putting the new entity under MOI will limit its ability to fully coordinate all aspects of counterterrorism, to include social and economic elements that will be critical for success. (Ref B) End note.) The new organ would oversee all elements of the fight against terrorism and, consequently, substantially strengthen the Interior Minister. PM Erdogan is now mulling over whether he should elevate the Minister of the Interior to DPM level, Sivgin claimed.

¶5. (C) In response to a question, Sivgin said the proposal does not address Turkey's terrorism legislation, which is limited to acts against Turkey and Turkish interests. When we explained USG concerns about current terrorism legislation, he acknowledged the problem and suggested that it would probably be easier and more effective for him and other Turks to pursue the issue rather than the USG. With the EU accession process in mind, one key priority for the drafters was maintaining a balance between security concerns and the need to protect democratic values and human rights, Sivgin noted. For this, they consulted European institutions, drawing from the German, UK and Spanish models, among others.

Military Reluctance

¶6. (C) Placing the military under civilian control was another key element of his proposal, Sivgin noted, in part to bring Turkey's CT practices more in line with other developed countries. Not surprisingly, the military has been reluctant in its support as it considers itself to have primary responsibility for counterterrorism and does not want to cede authority to civilians, according to Sivgin. (Note: TGS Chief Ilker Basbug has also expressed publicly the need for the civilian leadership to take the lead in formulating a comprehensive approach to addressing terrorism, particularly with respect to the PKK. End note.) Proponents of the proposal attempted to persuade the military that the new arrangement would allow them to share responsibility for any failures with civilian decision-makers. He claimed that the military eventually agreed at an NSC meeting. He was quick to add, however, that no final decision has been made, many issues remain unresolved and the military still fundamentally objects. Sivgin predicted that the new counterterrorism structure would not be unveiled until after local elections on March 29. (Note: In a novel approach to sharing responsibility, Sivgin described how some proponents have suggested that the opposition parties be brought into the new process, thus co-opting the opposition and forcing them, too, to share responsibility. End note.)

Fighting Stove-piping

¶7. (C) Without elaborating, Sivgin admitted that other elements within the government are also resistant to the proposed changes. Addressing the issue of internal stove-piping, Sivgin reported that the proposal includes a provision for all CT-related information to be brought under the umbrella of the new mechanism. Under his original draft, a new Council would also include representatives from all security related government ministries and agencies (U/S for Domestic Security, MOJ, MOD, MOI, MOT, Jandarma, TNIO, State Planning Organization, NSC, TNP and Coast Guard). Sivgin did not elaborate on the proposed role of the Council or the

status of the Council in current deliberations.

Comment

18. (C) As a former minister himself and friend of DPM Cicek, Sivgin is well-placed to provide raw material for government initiatives. The current negotiations, however, are out of his hands. As a relative outsider looking in, he may be guessing as much as we about the intentions of the various actors, particularly the military. Where Sivgin may see ongoing meetings to refine the details of his original work, we see potential sandbagging by a military reluctant to hand over authority to civilian bodies, particularly in the Southeast where a robust military presence remains. PM Erdogan held a high-level counterterrorism meeting February 4 to discuss the issue further. He is expected to return a final draft of the initiative to the NSC for another review on February 26, according to the press. Pending NSC formal approval, the initiative would then move to the Cabinet for final approval and implementation. Sivgin is aware that the end product may bear little resemblance to his original proposal, but claims that reports in the press reflect his initial input. Once he sees the product of his labor, Sivgin may be able to provide valuable insight into how his proposal changed, why changes may have been made, and the new structure's efficacy.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:Turk_ey

Jeffrey